

# SOLID GROUND

## GLOBAL ADVOCACY AWARD WINNERS

In January 2020, Habitat for Humanity's Global Advocacy Award was awarded to three national organizations in each of Habitat for Humanity's respective regions: Latin America and the Caribbean; Europe, Middle East and Africa; and the Asia-Pacific. The award acknowledges and celebrates the advocacy efforts to increase access to land for shelter achieved through the Solid Ground campaign and furthers the advocacy and policy efforts of each winner beyond the end of the Solid Ground campaign in March 2020.

This year's winners reflect the diversity of policy and advocacy action across Habitat's network. From regional level advocacy efforts engaging various branches of government, to facilitating access to information with education and systemic improvements, to addressing the unique needs of smaller communities in understanding and accessing their housing rights, our network is advocating for policy solutions by using their expertise and their voice to increase access to adequate and affordable housing.

**Below, we celebrate the incredible achievements of this year's winners: Habitat for Humanity Brazil, Habitat for Humanity Côte d'Ivoire and Habitat for Humanity India:**

### **Habitat Brazil: Putting a stop to forced evictions through policy change and coalition building**



Since enrolling in the Solid Ground campaign in 2016, Habitat for Humanity Brazil has been working on improving tenure security for low-income communities at risk of eviction. Even though the constitution of Brazil includes protections, many low-income families are forcibly evicted from their land, as large-scale private interests and development projects are prioritized over the rights of affected communities.

To address the ongoing issue of evictions, Habitat Brazil has taken a local approach to their advocacy strategy, developing methodologies that can be replicated in national and global contexts. Habitat Brazil's strategy is multi-pronged: building coalitions with stakeholders; facilitating outreach to judicial and representative authorities; mapping and monitoring land conflicts; conducting a feasibility study for turning abandoned buildings into social housing units; and, building public support and advocating for democratic processes in local and national decision-making. Through advocacy and policy engagement, Habitat Brazil's efforts have led to tangible results in securing tenure, including the ratification of the Decree for Collection by Abandonment in Recife, which gives low-income people access to social housing, in addition to ensuring the Urban Plan of Recife which protects people living in informal settlements from evictions.

With the support of partnerships and expertise that Habitat Brazil has developed through the Solid Ground campaign, their advocacy efforts will extend well into the future. Habitat Brazil will leverage the campaign's successes, and will lead new projects to advocate for adequate housing.

## Habitat Côte d'Ivoire: Increasing tenure security through grassroots efforts and improved land certification systems

Since enrolling in the Solid Ground campaign in 2016, Habitat for Humanity Côte d'Ivoire has focused on improving land tenure security for people living in rural communities. Following the land-based conflict in the 2000s, the Ivorian government has made land governance a priority. However, the government does not have all the necessary resources to implement wide-scale land reforms to address the challenges in securing land and property rights.

Recognizing the importance of land documentation, Habitat Côte d'Ivoire created an advocacy plan to create change. Through grassroots engagement, they informed families and individuals on the importance of land tenure and the process needed to obtain land documentation. Simultaneously, they worked with regional and village authorities to implement a more effective and efficient land certification system. Additionally, they created new tools through technology and apps to enable collection of land data. Finally, in partnership with local stakeholders, they established a regional observatory on land rights that will lead to further research and innovation. To date, Habitat Côte d'Ivoire has supported over 99,457 people in local villages access land documentation.

Through their expertise and partnerships built throughout the Solid Ground campaign, Habitat Côte d'Ivoire's advocacy efforts on systematic change will extend well into the future. Habitat Côte d'Ivoire will continue to work in coalition, through raising awareness on land rights and land titling procedures.

## Habitat India: Connecting marginalized communities with their land rights

Since enrolling in the Solid Ground campaign in 2016, Habitat for Humanity India has prioritized ensuring existing land and housing policies are balanced and inclusive, to support marginalized groups, such as the Irula community.

To ensure existing policies extend to previously unrecognized communities, such as the Irula community, Habitat India worked with Irula families to equip them with information and tools to advocate for proper land documentation. Habitat India provided guidance to the Irula community to form inclusive community committees, including women, youth and community leaders to build relationships with district-level government authorities and advocate for their land rights. To date, approximately 5,000 people have successfully petitioned the government for land documentation. Additionally, recognizing that they cannot do this work alone, Habitat India has developed a coalition with 60 organizations comprising of civil society, the private sector, and various levels of government, funding agencies, micro-finance companies, and international NGOs. The close cooperation with the government has resulted in leveraging US\$5 million in the form of land and subsidies for housing.



As Habitat India continues its policy and advocacy for communities routinely and systematically denied recognition of land rights, they look to achieve systems-level change, building on the community-level success they have already realized, to improve access to land for shelter at scale for even more people across India.